

claims remain in dependent form, however, as it is submitted that their respective independent claims are patentable in their own right for the reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-6, 8-12, 18, 19, 22, 23, 37, 39, 40, 44 and 45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by the published article in the Atlantic Online publication. In addition, Claims 24, 26 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Mitchell '732. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a system for playing a computer game, comprising a plurality of player apparatus for the input of user instructions and at least one game processing apparatus storing data defining a 3D game environment. As claimed, the player apparatus and the game processing apparatus are connected and information is transferred to enable each player to view the status of the 3D game environment and to control one or more objects therein. The system further comprises broadcast means for broadcasting data defining at least one view of the 3D game environment for receipt by a plurality of observers.

Claim 4 relates to a method of operating a computer graphic system to effect a computer game, which graphics system comprises a plurality of player apparatus for the input of user instructions and at least one game processing apparatus storing data defining a 3D game environment. The method includes the steps of transferring information between the player apparatus and the game processing apparatus to enable each player to view the status of the 3D game environment and to control one or more objects therein, and broadcasting data defining at least one view of the 3D game environment for receipt by a plurality of observers to enable the observers to view the game.

In Claim 11, a computer graphics apparatus is comprised of storage means for storing data defining a 3D game environment, and game processing means for amending stored

data in dependence upon player control of objects in the game environment. In addition, a means is provided for generating broadcast data defining at least one view of the game environment, and broadcasting means is operable to broadcast the broadcast data.

Claim 18 relates to a method of operating a computer graphics apparatus in which is stored data defining a 3D game environment. The method includes the steps of updating the stored data in response to received signals defining player control of objects in the game, generating broadcast data defining at least one view of the game environment, and broadcasting the broadcast data for receipt by a plurality of game observer apparatus.

Claims 22 and 23 relate to a storage medium storing instructions for causing a programmable processing apparatus to become operable and to a signal carrying instructions for causing the programmable processing apparatus to become operable, respectively, and correspond substantially to Claim 18. In these claims, therefore, data defining a 3D game environment is updated in accordance with signals defining control of objects in the game by a plurality of players, and broadcast data defining at least one view of the game environment is generated. The broadcast data is broadcast for receipt by a plurality of game observer apparatus.

The art applied against these claims, i.e., the Atlantic Online article, is directed to online chess. The Office Action asserts that this article teaches a system for playing a computer game that includes storing data defining a 3D game environment. This assertion is respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully submitted that the online game discussed in the Atlantic Online article relates to a two-dimensional game of chess, as depicted in the figure on page 1, and that figure simply does not show a three-dimensional chess game. As understood, the chess game disclosed in this article is played in two dimensions--as chess pieces are moved

conventionally in two dimensions on the board depicted on screen--and there is no teaching or suggestion of a 3D game.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Atlantic Online article fails to anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 4, 11, 18, 22 and 23, in which a 3D game environment is provided. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In Claim 24, a method of generating a broadcast signal includes the steps of receiving data defining a sequence of images of a 3D computer game environment in which objects are controlled by a plurality of players, and broadcasting a signal conveying images of the game for receipt by a plurality of game observer apparatus.

Lastly, Claim 26 relates to a method of making a recording of video data, and includes the steps of receiving data defining a sequence of images of a 3D computer game environment in which objects are controlled by a plurality of players, and recording, either directly or indirectly, data defining images of the game on a storage device for distribution to a plurality of game observers.

As asserted in the Office Action, the patent to Mitchell teaches a distributed object oriented multi-user domain with multi-media presentations that includes receiving data defining a sequence of images of 3D computer game environment, broadcasting a signal conveying images of the game and recording data defining images of the game.

In contrast to the position taken in the Office Action, however, it is respectfully submitted that Mitchell fails to teach or suggest, among other features, broadcasting a signal conveying images of the game or recording data defining images of the game as set forth in Applicant's claimed invention. To the contrary, Mitchell is understood to provide change data,

and not image data, to participating users to control objects that are affected by the change only. By transmitting change data to only the participating users to control objects that are affected by the change, Mitchell is able to reduce server computational and data transmission resource demands (see column 9, lines 7-28 and lines 46-65).

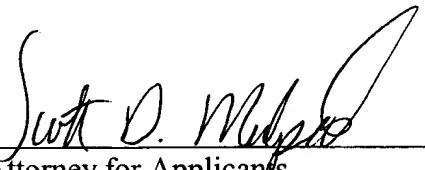
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully requested.

Therefore, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 4, 11, 18, 22, 23, 24 and 26 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, the respective dependent claims set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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